

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Anthony Rendon, Chair,  
California State Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife  
FROM: Nancy L.C. Steele, Executive Director  
SUBJECT: 2013 Water Bond Framework Comments  
DATE: August 21, 2013

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### **Comments on the 2013 Water Bond Framework**

The Council for Watershed Health appreciates the opportunity to build upon our input for the Proposed Principles for Developing a Water Bond (sent August 1, 2013) following the Water Bond Working Group's August 15 hearing. We thank the California State Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife for outstanding leadership throughout the process of crafting the new Water Bond.

Regarding the provisions for "Water Quality: Clean and Safe Drinking Water" (V.B.4), we encourage the "Stormwater Management" category to include funding specifically designated for projects that are multi-benefit. We have learned from demonstration projects, such as the [Elmer Avenue Neighborhood Retrofit Project](#) in Sun Valley, how multi-benefit projects can increase local supplies of water, reduce water quality impacts, enhance environmental health, provide jobs, and expand green space in neighborhoods. Our research, combined with research conducted around the country, has made it clear that stormwater capture has numerous benefits, even beyond increasing water supply and improving water quality, including benefits for human health, the economy and climate change adaptation.

Investments in efficient stormwater management practices will be essential for the sustainable transformation of water infrastructure throughout the State of California. As a local example, the [Central and West Coast Basin Stormwater Recharge Feasibility Study](#) found that approximately 17,000<sup>1</sup> acre-feet of annual rainfall can be feasibly infiltrated on about 10 percent of the land area within the WRD service area (270,000 acres). Moreover, in highly

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<sup>1</sup> Equal to 5.5 trillion gallons

urbanized Los Angeles County, distributed stormwater capture projects may annually yield more than 160,000 gallons per acre of recharge<sup>2</sup> to increase local water supplies.

SB 790 (2009, Pavley) added *stormwater resources management plans* to the water code. Funding for integrated water management in the Bond should take advantage of this framework by encouraging these plans throughout the state, similar to what the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is currently developing through its Stormwater Capture Master Plan.

The capacity for stormwater capture to improve regional self-reliance is significant. The urbanized portion of the Greater Los Angeles Region produces 380,000 acre-feet of stormwater runoff in an average year, while the unused groundwater storage capacity for the same region is estimated by MWD at over one million acre-feet, for example. Integrated plans to capture and utilize this water using centralized, regional and distributed techniques are a necessary next step.

Regarding the provisions for “Climate Change Preparedness & Regional Self-Reliance for Water” (VII.B.3), we question the need for the specific program allocations within Integrated Regional Water Management of “Water Conservation,” “Water Recycling” and “Desalination with Renewable Energy Generation & Reduced Delta Exports.” Instead of designating specific program allocations within Integrated Regional Water Management, we endorse a greater focus on regional solutions, as identified by IRWM groups. Overall, individual regions should set their own priorities to achieve self-reliance, including the tracking of targeted, region-specific goals.

In reference to our previous comment on the Proposed Principles for Developing a Water Bond (sent August 1, 2013), we want to emphasize designing a granting process that improves accountability without increasing the administrative burden. We also endorse policies that allow grantees to be reimbursed for fair and reasonable indirect costs of their work. Once a grant is awarded, in our experience it can take in excess of six months to finalize the contract. Each invoice takes up to ten hours of administrative time to prepare, after which we wait three months or more to receive payment. We would encourage policies that reduce this burden and allow us to spend more of our time and energies on solving our state’s water problems, while ensuring effective accountability.

We thank you for providing an open process to comment on the Water Bond development and look forward to continuing to participate in the development process.

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<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council. 2010. Water Augmentation Study: Research, Strategy and Implementation Report. Los Angeles. [was.watershedhealth.org](http://was.watershedhealth.org)